

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLYINFORMATION

October 15, 1970

MORI/CDF
C05137808

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL HAIG

FROM: John H. Holdridge *JH*SUBJECT: Memorandum from Helms to Dr. Kissinger on Possible
Visit by Lon Nol to the U. S.

The memorandum from CIA Director Helms to Dr. Kissinger asking for his advice on how to handle the feeler from Sirik Matak on a possible visit by Lon Nol to the U. S. has of course been badly overtaken by events. Cambodian Chief of State Cheng Heng is on his way as Cambodian representative to the UNGA Anniversary.

We will therefore need to send a reply to Sirik Matak

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[redacted] which apologizes for the lack of

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response. I would suggest we say that the message simply did not come to Dr. Kissinger's attention in time because of his heavy concentration on the Middle East crisis and on his preparations for the President's visit to Europe. We would add that we are sure Chief of State Cheng Heng will represent Cambodia ably and put Cambodia's point across in such forums as his address to the National Press Club. Finally, we would express regrets over the delayed response. (I would not at this point suggest offering a visit by Lon Nol to the U. S., since the UN justification will have passed and a subsequent trip will require handling as an official visit requiring the President's approval. We might wish to consider this later, though.)

On balance, I believe that it is just as well that Lon Nol did not come. In the eyes of all the Vietnicks and critics of the President's Cambodian decision Lon Nol is a prime villain of the piece, and his presence in the U. S. might have stirred up considerable controversy in a period just prior to the elections. Cheng Heng, on the other hand, is relatively unknown and is in a better position to present Cambodia's case to the American public without so much controversy.

I can handle this matter with CIA if you so desire.

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